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China promises no nuclear sharing

By Rita McWilliams
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An American ambassador at large who negotiated the proposed nuclear pact with China, said yesterday China has given "ironclad" guarantees that it will not reprocess spent nuclear fuel or share the technology with other nations without U.S. approval.

"Our contacts with the Chinese have already demonstrated that they appreciate the importance we attach to non-proliferation," said Ambassador Richard T. Kennedy. "We are satisfied that the policies they have adopted are consistent with our own basic views."

The pact would allow U.S. businesses to bid on some \$6 billion in nuclear components that the Chinese need to build as many as 12 nuclear power plants by the year 2000.

Competition already has begun for the trade, with France, Japan and Sweden vying for the business. Administration officials also said that the pact could increase trade in other areas with the world's most populous nation.

The pact came under heavy fire from House Foreign Affairs Committee members despite the assurances.

"There are all kinds of loopholes in this thing and I think they'll wiggle out of them if they can," said Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind. "Let's make this airtight."

Lawmakers from every political spectrum slammed the pact for not including written guarantees that prevent China from reprocessing fuels to get plutonium, used in making nuclear weapons. They also were skeptical that the pact contained safeguards to protect against sharing technology with other nations.

Rep. Edward Markey, D-Mass., said China's proliferation record "is like that

of a person with six indictments and three convictions. Now, after only a year on parole, the administration is saying that China should be made the warden."

Helping China build its economy could end up risking the sovereignty of Taiwan, a long-time U.S. ally, he said.

Mr. Markey said Nuclear Regulatory Commission and CIA secret reports showed that both those agencies had reservations about the pact.

But Kenneth L. Adelman, director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, said The People's Republic of China, which has been sharing nuclear technology with other nations in the hope of reducing the power of the United States and the Soviet Union, is changing course and the pact could help discourage them from further proliferation.

The proposed pact has been submitted for congressional review as an executive agreement. Unlike treaties, executive agreements do not require congressional approval and go into effect in 90 legislative days unless both the House and Senate pass resolutions to reject them.

Resolutions to reject the pact with China likely would be vetoed by President Reagan, who has signed off on the agreement. Then Congress would need a two-thirds vote to halt the agreement.

Mr. Markey yesterday urged the Foreign Affairs Committee to ask President Reagan to submit a waiver because the pact does not conform with current federal law governing the sale of nuclear technology.

The president is under no obligation to do this, but opponents of the pact — including Sens. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., and Sen. William Proxmire, D-Wis. — are expected to try and generate enough political pressure to force Mr. Reagan to submit a waiver.

That would put the agreement on a different level and congressional approval would be needed. Mr. Markey said then the pact "would undergo such scrutiny" that it would "collapse."